

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 158

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID PGOV SWEL HA

SUBJ: DROUGHT RELIEF EFFORT IN NORTHWEST HAITI

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 1425; B. PORT AU PRINCE 1610

1. REFTEL GAVE MY OBSERVATIONS BASED ON TWO INSPECTION TRIPS TO THE NORTHWEST IN LATE MAY AND EARLY JUNE. SINCE THEN THE RELIEF EFFORT HAS PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY AND AS OF END OF JUNE THE NUMBER OF WEEKLY FOOD RECIPIENTS HAD REACHED OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE PROGRAM'S TARGET. PERIODIC SITUATION REPORT CABLES HAVE SUPPLIED STATISTICAL DETAILS ON THE FEEDING OPERATION AND WILL BE CONTINUED.

2. ON THE BROADER QUESTION OF WHETHER NOW FOR THE NORTHWEST, DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF THE GOH REQUEST TO THE OAS/CEPCIES SOLICITING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE AREA AND THE IDB COMMENDABLY QUICK RESPONSE IN THE FORM OF A SURVEY TEAM WHICH VISITED HAITI DURING PAST WEEK. US AID OFFICERS AND I MET WITH IDB TEAM TWICE AND WERE BRIEFED ON TEAM'S FINDINGS PRIOR ITS DEPARTURE. UNDERSTAND REPORT WILL RECOMMEND THAT SMALL TEAM OF OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS (2 MEN) BE ORGANIZED QUICKLY UNDER IDB AUSPICES TO EXAMINE THE AREA FOR POSSIBLE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT PROJECTS. ONE EXPERT WOULD BE ON DESERT TYPE LANDS AND THE OTHER PRIMARILY A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WATER ENGINEER.

3. IDB TEAM ALSO FEELS THAT FURTHER RESEARCH WARRANTED TO DETERMINE FEASIBILITY ESTABLISHING A FISHING CENTER IN MOLE ST. NICOLAS AREA. THIS WOULD INVOLVE CONFIRMING EXISTENCE OF COMMERCIAL QUANTITIES TUNA AND SARDINES IN AREA AND WOULD BE RELATED TO THE PROPOSED FISHING LOAN CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY IDB.

4. IDB TEAM ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST EXAMINING THE FORTHCOMING FEASIBILITY STUDIES DUE BY DECEMBER SNF THE UNDP/FAO PROJECT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VALLEY OF TROIS-RIVIERES NEAR PORT-DE-PAIX. WHILE THIS PROJECT LOCATED SLIGHTLY TO EAST OF CURRENT DISASTER AREA, IT IS WITHIN NORTHWEST DEPARTMENT AND LOGICALLY INCLUDED IN ANY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

5. USAID PRESENT AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES IN NORTHWEST AREA, AS WE TOLD IDB, INCLUDE A) UPGRADING THE JEAN RABEL IRRIGATION SYSTEM (ABOUT 600 HECTARES), TO START EARLY CY 76 FOLLOWING FEASIBILITY STUDIES THIS CY; B) SUPPORTING AGRICULTURAL FEEDER ROAD PROJECT COUNTRY-WIDE, WHICH INCLUDES ALL PRINCIPAL ROADS IN NORTHWEST AREA; C) FUNDING NEW PVO GRANT (CARE) FOR A POTABLE WATER INITIATIVE IN NORTHWEST, AND D) CONTINUING AID SUPPORT OF HACHO (WHOSE EFFECTIVENESS WE WILL SOON BE EVALUATING WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO INTRODUCING MORE INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AT BETTER COST-BENEFIT RATIOS).

6. WHILE WE ARE GENERALLY BEARISH ON ANY REAL AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL THIS UNDERENDOWED AND OVER-POPULATED REGION, WE FEEL THAT SPECIAL FOCUS ON BASIC NEEDS BY IDB AS ONE OF PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL DONORS IS MOST TIMELY AND SHOULD BE STRONGLY SUPPORTED. AID PROGRAM CAN CLEARLY TIE IN WITH ANY SUBSEQUENT IDB FUNDED PROJECTS; PRESUMABLY OTHER DONORS WOULD BE WILLING TO PICK UP DISCRETE PORTIONS OF ANY VIABLE PROJECTS WHICH MAY SURFACE.

7. TIME AND NBC CORRESPONDENTS WHO RECENTLY TOURED AREA WERE JUSTIFIABLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT CAN BE DONE IN LONGER TERM FOR NORTHWEST HAITI, AND THEIR COVERAGE PRESUMABLY WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REFLECT THIS VIEW. AS A COURTESY THEY MIGHT BE MADE AWARE OF FOREGOING DEVELOPMENT WHICH, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER'S PERSONAL INSPECTION TOUR OF AREA (REFTEL B) SUGGESTS THAT A NEW DEVELOPMENT IMPETUS IS IN THE MAKING. THIS IN TURN SHOULD HAVE USEFUL IMPLICATION FOR OTHER AGRICULTURALLY MARGINAL AND WATER-DEPRIVED AREAS OF HAITI. ISHAM UNQUOTE

ISHAM

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